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REFLECTIONS ON BOGOTA

by Felix Morley

On February 11, of this year, HUMAN EVENTS published an Analysis of "Communism in Latin America", by Ralph de Toledano.

This article called attention to "the fact that a hard core of 500,000 Communists in Latin America is girding for battle with the North American way of living". It pointed out that the Communist-dominated Confederacion de Trabajadores de America Latina (CTAL), under orders from Moscow, has concentrated its strength in "key areas" where most damage can be done to the United States. The areas named were Cuba and Panama, from both of which Colombia is easily accessible.

There is nothing vainglorious in recalling this contribution by HUMAN EVENTS two months ago. It is cited merely to show how easily the catastrophe which has taken place in Bogota could have been foreseen, and guarded against. Yet the various Intelligence offices of the United States Government apparently did not foresee the catastrophe. And evidently no effective measures were taken to avert the tragedy which flared out on April 9.

The Communist putsch in Bogota was tragic because of the lives lost and the senseless property damage involved. But it was also disastrous because of the humiliation suffered by American diplomacy.

After elaborate preparation, the Ninth Conference of the American Republics is solemnly opened at Bogota. The Secretary of State of the United States attends to emphasize the importance which this country attaches to the gathering. A whole retinue of advisers, experts and specialists is sent down from the Department of State. The advertised objective is to consolidate the Latin Republics against Communist infiltration.

Then, under the very nose of General Marshall, the Communists stage a well-planned, well-organized coup. The Conference is not merely broken up and its dignity irretrievably ruined. Even the official Minutes of the proceedings to date are destroyed, and the whole solemn gathering reduced to a confusion which would be farcical except for the human suffering involved.

II

Undoubtedly this humiliation of General Marshall was the objective of the entire plot. The name of the American Secretary of State has

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become synonomous with the "Marshall plan" of "containing" Communism with dollars.

Among the Latin peoples the loss of "face", of personal dignity, is almost as serious a matter as it is among the Chinese. General Marshall had already "lost face" in China. In Bogota there was opportunity to discredit him in the Latin world as well. The opportunity was seized. On April 9, a company of soldiers could have protected the Conference rooms from pillage. Now all the army of Colombia cannot put together the prestige which has been shattered.

This Machiavellian stroke was obviously timed to take place on the eve of the vitally important Italian general election. The point here was to suggest to the Italian people that the policies of the United States are thoroughly unpopular in Latin America, and that only venal and sycophantic governments favor them. If the Colombians, next door to the United States, do not respect General Marshall, why should the Italians? Even to pose that question, so dramatically, is to weaken the hand of Prime Minister de Gasperi, whose whole campaign in Italy has been based on the efficacy of American support.

Secretary Marshall had announced that if the Communists win in Italy, that country will be stricken from the role of those receiving assistance under ERP. The natural counterstroke to this was a move casting doubt on the efficacy and reliability of American assistance. Some stroke to that effect was anticipated and predicted. But our policy-makers seem to have had no anticipation that it would be carried out in this hemisphere. Nevertheless, it should have been clear that one way to besmirch our role of good neighbor to Italy would be to discredit the good neighbor policy where it has been most actively preached -- in Latin America.

It is not by accident that the New York Daily Worker, official organ of the American Communist Party, concentrates on the "terrific black eye" given the Truman foreign policy by the Bogota revolt. That is the party line. That is the conclusion which Moscow wants people to draw. Again we have underestimated the subtlety of the forces which regard the United States as the principal obstacle to their drive for world dominion.

Writing in the Daily Worker of April 12, Joseph Starobin tells us the moral that Moscow wants to have drawn from the Bogota rising. "Colombia's common people", he says, "showed their anger with the semi-Fascist rulers whom Secretary Marshall nominates to chair conferences, the hated men who exploit Colombia's wealth in co-operation with Wall Street".

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III

If the humiliation of the United States at Bogota could be concealed, our natural instinct would probably be to conceal it. But to laugh this one off is not possible, and fortunately it is also impossible to counteract the aftermath by calling for more airplanes, more generals, more atom bombs and more conscription of men and industry. Mobilization of brains rather than brawn is the urgent necessity posed by the Bogota episode.

Therefore, it is encouraging that the immediate reaction is a demand that the duplicating maze of Intelligence services developed during the war be simplified and -- if we must use the word -- "streamlined". The present confusion is preposterous.

The armed services have their Intelligence departments, as is natural, and the FBI has established a solid reputation for its work in the domestic field. But, in addition, there is an incredibly complicated Intelligence setup in the Department of State. And, for the past year or more, there has been the hush-hush Central Intelligence Agency, which is charitably supposed to be co-ordinating all the other work of this character.

Merely to examine the Intelligence setup in the Department of State is to get an idea of the utter bureaucratic confusion which has developed. There is an Office of Intelligence Research, which incidentally has a whole separate "Division of Research for American Republics". Then there is a separate Office of Intelligence Collection and Dissemination. There is a separate "Division of International Security Affairs", within the Office of Special Political Affairs, and another "Division of Security and Investigations" within the Office of Controls. All these overlapping and conflicting agencies have been piled on top of the comprehensive area organization, which used to do first-class Intelligence work without highfalutin names and titles.

It is not surprising to read, in a confidential report on the Department of State recently made to Congress, that:

> "The Department has an over-abundance of units, sections, branches, divisions and offices . . . there is a strong suspicion that much of this lengthy, detailed organization is for the purpose of increasing the number of personnel that can be awarded a title."

IV

The Intelligence work of the Department of State should either be greatly simplified or completely eliminated, for, as the Bogota episode shows, it is at present almost worthless. But in addition there should

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be a review of the entire non-career service in this swollen department. Something has been done to screen out the Communists and fellow travellers. But the number of plain simpletons, who got into the Department during the war, and stuck there, is an equally serious problem.

As an illustration of downright incompetence, I have dug from my files a copy of an inter-office memorandum prepared in the Division of Political Studies of the Department of State on December 30, 1943. It is an incredibly ill-informed prediction of Russian post-war policy, saying in part:

> "The Soviet Union . . . goes no further than to insist that in Eastern Europe the States may maintain complete autonomy and independence and any form of government which is not hostile to the Soviet Union. From the Czech Pact, it is clear that Czechoslovakia will be permitted to maintain a democratic form of government based on her own choice of economic system. From the Italian Pact, it is clear that the Soviet Union is prepared to permit even in this area any form of government except Fascist . . . "

This palpably absurd analysis was written by a policy-making officer, who joined the Department of State during the war, and who has since received three promotions to his present $10,000 post as division chief. It is not at all an exceptional case. But it is illustrative of the type of wishful thinking on which American post-war policy has been based.

When policy is formulated on the basis of improbabilities, it is to be expected that eventually those called in to administer will find themselves faced with impossibilities. Then, to baffled minds, war comes to appear the only way out.

As long as the American Republic confined itself to its own business, the quality of governmental personnel was not a matter of great moment. Since government was of secondary importance, bureaucratic incompetence could be tolerated.

But if the Republic is to follow the course of Empire on which it has now embarked, its foreign policy must be conducted, like that of Soviet Russia, by a trained elite. It is not enough to create a labyrinth of overlapping bureaus, and to give grandiloquent titles to earnest but immature college professors. To do so is to invite humiliations like that of Bogota.

On such invitations it is unnecessary to inscribe R. S. V. P. They will be accepted.

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Not Merely Gossip *A Supplement to* Human Events VOL. V, NO. 15

By Frank C. Hanighen April 14, 1948

One subject of keen speculation in Washington these days is whether Mr. Paul Hoffman, just appointed head of the Economic Co-operative Agency (handling ERP), will be a "real boss" or just another "prince regent". Will Mr. Hoffman create an organization functioning in harmony with his present intentions; or will he go the way of so many business men who enter Government service and become the puppet of bureaucrats shaping policy according to their own ideas? It cannot be too much emphasized that the public rarely realizes the extent to which bureaucracy influences policies.

The Republican majority in Congress waged what they considered a successful fight to keep ERP separate from the State Department. But already the State Department is making an effort to staff the new organization. The Department has received about 7,000 applications for jobs. The new organization will deal with foreign economic problems; and therefore the economic sections of the State Department offer a convenient reservoir to which the well-meaning Mr. Hoffman and his deputies may turn for personnel.

The former President of Studebaker may not be aware that it is just this area of the State Department which has been filled with former FEA, BEW and OWI employees who are New Dealers. It is interesting to note that one of the first names advanced for a key job under Hoffman is that of Charles P. Kindleberger, former head of the State Department's Division of German and Austrian Economic Affairs. As related in this column on February 5, 1947, Mr. Kindleberger collided with Mr. Herbert Hoover in the latter's constructive efforts to help Germany back to its feet. Also, Mr. Wayne Taylor is mentioned as a possible aide. Mr. Taylor was one of the prominent New Dealers in the Administration during the war.

Mr. Hoffman shows some signs of independence. For instance, he is reportedly considering Mr. Richard F. Allen, formerly of the International Red Cross, for a high post. Mr. Allen is a skilled administrator and has had extensive experience in relief activities in Europe. Mr. Hoffman, however, is said to have one dangerous weakness. He wants to be known as a "liberal" business man and is sensitive to criticism in this respect. If certain Capital columnists start a campaign against "reactionaries" in the new organization, Mr. Hoffman may become timorous and yield. On the other hand, if he stands firm, he has a chance of running his own show.

It is only a chance, according to those who are familiar with the ways of the bureaucracy. The administrator may have good men at the top and still lose the game. It is remarkable how many files and papers can be "mislaid" and decisions postponed by lower-echelon officials, who have ideas and prejudices different from those of their superiors. Those who know their Washington have their fingers crossed about the fate of the new organization.

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The confusion on Capitol Hill about proposed Defense funds is such as to baffle even those observers who understand both legislative and military affairs. Congress shows signs of increasing appropriations for the Air Force, but not for the other services. Secretary Forrestal warns that if the Air Force is greatly expanded, the Navy and Ground Forces must also be increased in proportion. This, he indicated, might cost as much as $15 billion. And well-coached commentators repeat the Forrestal formula, "a balance of all the forces". Finally, Air Secretary Symington testified for a 70-group air force, which Forrestal opposes.

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What is behind all these moves is explained by a reliable source (a former regular Army officer, closely in touch with the situation) as follows: The recent Key West conference of "high brass" ended in a decision for a "balance of all the forces", instead of an acceptance of the "Air Concept". This concept, as explained in Not Merely Gossip, March 24, 1948, calls for an Air Force as the center of all defense with Ground Forces and Navy as important but supporting arms. According to the "balance of forces" decision, the Navy would perform certain missions which the Air Concept would assign to the Air Force. In fact, the Navy proposals would result in duplication of missions. And the Navy pushes its demand for the $1.5 billion aircraft carrier program.

Also, the Ground Forces want expansion to an extent contrary to the Air Concept. There's obviously a deal between Navy and Ground, as against Air. The White House and Forrestal are pitted against Air, which derives unexpected support from Congress. Hence the Air Force feels bold enough to speak out frankly, through Symington. The Congress, which probably does not understand the Air Concept, finds it convenient to boost Air funds a few billions rather than to approve the much larger funds needed for a massive expansion of all the forces. The proper proportion of Defense funds (expressed in terms of billions of dollars) should be 5-3-2; Air Force, Ground Forces, Navy, respectively. That would satisfy a Congress intent on balancing the budget.

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"Harry", said the Democratic Senator dispassionately, "isn't going to withdraw, judging by his present temper. A certain stubborness which the folks up here recognize has got hold of him. He's set his teeth, he's made a decision, and he won't give in. The Democrats in the Senate (and I believe that goes for the other side of the Hill, too) hate him, and he hates us. There's a complete break, and no liaison, not even through Les Biffle [formerly Secretary of the Senate, now on the White House staff]. A lot of the boys have been giving Les the cold shoulder when he visits the Hill, and it hurts him. I hear he's now turning against Harry. It would be natural, for Les has his roots in the Hill.

"I don't think Les is happy with the boys down at the other end of the Avenue. They have a different psychology. They have no links with the Hill. Their jobs in the White House are at stake. It's not to their interest to tell Harry he's wrecking the Party. A lot of his stubbornness is inspired by them. No, Harry won't give up -- not yet.

"But there's one point at which he might reconsider. It may come before the Convention. When Crump of Memphis, Pendergast of Kansas City, Jake Arvey of Cook County, Frank Hague of Jersey and Ed Flynn of the Bronx come to the White House in a body, then Harry will face the music. I know what the bosses are saying now. And if they say it to Harry personally, in a body, he'll be impressed far more than by anything Clark Clifford can say. The bosses may tell Harry that not only is the national ticket doomed, but also its local tickets. They can warn him that the Party will lose every courthouse and city hall in the country. That is a picture sure to impress Harry, for he was trained in that school. And then -- he may withdraw. But I'm not placing any bets one way or the other."

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The unfortunate President of Colombia announced that the cause of the appalling disturbances in his country last weekend was a Communist plot. He spoke with customary Latin tact, for he would not have been stretching the point too far if he had charged that the real culprit was the Roosevelt Administration. Like other Latin-American officials, he could have recalled how the United States Government urged reluctant Latin-American governments, in 1943-44, to recognize and to exchange

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diplomatic missions with Soviet Russia. The U. S. bears heavy responsibility for preparing the ground for Soviet fifth columnists.

The dragon's teeth sprouted in Colombia on Friday last, at a time when Secretary Marshall was trying to repair the ravages of our past diplomacy. The Argentine delegates to the Pan-American Conference in Bogota could hardly have been blamed for criticizing U. S. moves just the day before, after the bewildering experience with Washington's diplomatic somersaults. Latins probably were also puzzled by Washington's delay in recognizing that the uprising sprang from Communist origins. This column on that fateful Friday found the State Department unable to suggest that the Communists had anything to do with it. But one of the foremost experts on Latin America in Washington, a former Pentagon figure, felt no uncertainty. He said, "The revolt obviously did not follow the classic pattern of pronunciamientos in those countries -- the outs trying to oust the ins. It clearly followed the pattern of Comintern-directed revolutions throughout the world."

It could hardly be an accident that such revolts should occur, during the past month, in two countries where constitutional government and peaceful changes of regime have been the rule rather than the exception -- in Colombia and Costa Rica. Other agencies of the U. S. Government privately claim that the American Republics division of the State Department has sought to obscure the role of the Communists in the Costa Rican conflict. It is asked: Have some of the former followers of Spruille Braden influenced policy?

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The failure of our Intelligence to signal impending trouble in Colombia serves as one of the main topics of discussion in Washington this week. Storm clouds should have been noted months ago. As far back as June 25, 1947, this column reported that the incumbent regime has an uneasy seat. Recently certain American business interests displayed unusual caution about the country's future. Intelligence divisions of all the services, as well as the State Department, also knew that all was not well in Colombia. But if CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), the over-all Intelligence organization of the Government, knew anything about the impending crisis, it apparently kept the matter strictly to itself. As a result, Congress on April 12 created a sub-committee to investigate.

Congress was probably unaware that an Executive committee had already been investigating CIA. It has been a closely kept secret that the National Security Council, about two months ago, named a three-man committee to investigate this key agency. It is composed of Allen Dulles, Chairman, Matthew Correa, and William E. Jackson. It is believed that Secretary Marshall precipitated the decision to investigate. He complained to the President, so the story goes, about what he considered the inadequacy of Admiral Hillenkoetter, head of CIA. The Admiral, however, comes from Missouri and commanded the U. S. S. Missouri during the war. It was not possible, it was explained to Marshall, to replace him. In any case, complaints from State, the FBI and the Intelligence divisions of National Defense helped to inspire the creation of the Dulles committee, which was ordered to report by January, 1949. Presumably, work will now be accelerated and some conclusions will be reached long ere that date.

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Clarity Department. "Only this is clear: If the American people lack the wit and will to recapture the vision of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Wendell Willkie, to give new life to such hopes as are voiced by Henry A. Wallace, Glen Taylor, Claude Pepper and Wayne Morse, they will have made a covenant with hell and a pact with death." From a pamphlet, The Devil and Jimmy Byrnes, by Frederick L. Schuman, published by Soviet Russia Today.

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Book Events

The Inside Story of the Pendergast Machine, by the Man Who Smashed It: Maurice M. Milligan. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, $3.50. Reviewed by J. M. Lalley.

This book made its appearance under another title, which is also that of a well-known melody associated in the popular mind with the present national administration. Evidently there was some difficulty with the powerful American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, for last week the Messrs. Scribner dispatched urgent telegrams to editors and reviewers, begging them to refer to Mr. Milligan's work only by its sub-title as it appears at the top of this page.

The publication of such a book only a few months before the national convention is doubtless something more than coincidence. The history of the Pendergast regime in Kansas City, under which terrorism and murder were the allies of avarice and fraud, has been related in many places. Mr. Milligan, who was in charge of the prosecutions whereby old Tom Pendergast and many of his more important vassals were sent to the Leavenworth penitentiary, merely elaborates what is already well known. But he is at greater pains than the journalistic historians to emphasize President Truman's indebtedness to the regime and his relationship to the new machine that Jim Pendergast, a nephew, has constructed from the wreckage of the old. Among other things, Mr. Milligan is eager to retract the public statement he made four years ago that there was no reason to suspect that Mr. Truman was in any way involved in the evil deeds of the uncle; now he asserts that, because of the President's association with the nephew, "neither I nor any other citizen has the right to extend the benefit of a doubt. We gave Pendergastism an exciting funeral, but the corpse has made a notable recovery"; and Mr. Milligan implies that the White House assisted the revival. In 1946, you may remember, Mr. Truman invoked the help of the younger Pendergast to defeat Representative Roger Slaughter of Missouri, who had opposed some of the Administration measures in Congress. Nor was the appeal in vain; Mr. Slaughter was beaten by the 6-to-1 majorities returned for his opponent in the four wards of Kansas City where the Pendergast power remains sovereign. On the basis of an investigation undertaken by the indefatigable Kansas City Star, a Jackson County grand jury found evidences of "a deliberate and calculated plan" to steal the election from Mr. Slaughter by a fraudulent counting of votes, and 71 indictments were accordingly returned. Subsequently, the principal evidence, consisting of the illegally marked ballots and other documents, was stolen from the steel vaults of the Kansas City Courthouse, after an expert bit of burglar's art in blowing off the doors. It was not until this point that the Attorney General, Mr. Clark, whose lack of interest in the Kansas City frauds had been the subject of much indignation in the Judiciary Committee of the Senate, was persuaded that it might be well to have the evidence examined by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Since Mr. Milligan is dealing with matters of record, what he says is not discredited by the fact that he was defeated by Mr. Truman in 1940 for the Democratic nomination to the Senate, or that Mr. Truman, as a Senator, attacked Mr. Milligan's conduct of the cases against Tom Pendergast, or that Mr. Truman, as President, refused Mr. Milligan a further reappointment as United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri. "I realize", Mr. Milligan says, "that some of my readers will feel that I am working off a grudge"; but he assures them earnestly that this is not so. All the same, Mr. Milligan's interpretation of the Pendergast era, and of the role of the machine boss in American political life, suffers because it is the view of a reformer whose interest in politics is active rather than contemplative. The remedy he proposes for such evils has a charming ingenuousness. We must, he says, make sure that none but men of integrity and intelligence are elected to public office.

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